

**State Program Standing Committee
Child, Adolescent, and Family Unit
Department of Mental Health**

**March 24, 2008
12:00 – 2:00, Waterbury**

Present: Sandy Bartley, Kathy Holsopple, Joy Prior, Cindy Martel, Masha Ivanova
Absent: Robin Yandell, Cinn Smith, Patty Dupuis
Guests: Charlie Biss, Alice Maynard

I. Introductions

- A. Alice welcomed all the new appointees to the group. It is wonderful to have the committee's numbers back up to optimal levels. Members took time to introduce themselves and share their hopes for the committee. The major themes emerging from members' hopes included wanting the committee to be effective, moving beyond its previous focus of agency designation, and contributing to system change that would improve the system of care and reduce the level of hassle for all involved.
- B. Charlie gave a brief orientation. *Administrative Rules on Agency Designation* created three state level program standing committees in 1998: one each for children's mental health, adult mental health, and developmental services. [See the "lavender" book.] An important focus of that work was to develop and implement a set of quality standards that Vermont's public *preferred provider network* would meet and to assure that there was a family perspective in such evaluation. Providing recommendations to the Commissioner of Mental Health on whether or not each agency should be designated as meeting those standards is still a legal function of each state program standing committee.

However, now that we have been through more than one round of agency designation, the process requires less focused attention. This has freed up the time and energy of the committee to be able to control more of its agenda, picking topics it wishes to explore and developing recommendations for improvement in the mental health system of care. As an independent advisory committee, the group will decide how to best spend its time. Both the committee and the Department have limited personnel and financial resources, so these conditions need to be factored in to those decisions.

Note: There is a distinction between an advisory committee and an advocacy committee. Because members are appointed by the Governor, this committee is an advisory committee and not an advocacy group. It is hoped you will provide your best possible advice to the Department of Mental Health, whatever that may be. The committee may not conduct public campaigns against the public position of the Executive Branch. As individuals, each person remains free to act independently as always.

Members also discussed how they would like to run their meetings and how they might like to proceed with their orientation to this committee. Points made:

- Focus on discussion
- Primarily informal (no Robert's Rules)
- Need a chairperson with a potential back-up facilitator or two

- Would prefer to learn about the committee in small chunks; Alice will pull together some chunks before the next meeting as a type of “you are here” map

C. Business

- Discussed potential meeting dates;
 - It appears that 10:00 – 12:00 may be a better time.
 - Waterbury is an acceptable location.
 - Calling in to a meeting will always be an option. Let Alice know in advance if you will need to use this option.
 - Attendance will be important. Please let Alice know if you will be unable to attend.
 - It appeared that Thursday is a good choice; ruled out 3rd Thursday; looked at 2nd and 4th Thursday as strong possibilities. Alice to connect with the absent members. [**Note:** the 2nd Thursday has since been eliminated. Now looking at the 4th and the 1st Thursday.]

II. Updates

A. Appointment process

Alice reported that there will only be two positions open for consideration in 2008: Robin’s and Joy’s as the third position had been filled with the previous group due to a resignation. We hope to submit to the Governor’s office in mid-April.

B. VT Federation of Families

Kathy reported that May 6 will be Children’s Mental Health Day at the legislature. The theme will be “Our Children Thriving in Our Communities.” They

- have reserved the card room,
- will serve a legislative breakfast of coffee and muffins,
- will have a video on children’s mental health that they produced with UVM,
- will feature 5 books that families have found to be helpful,
- have fact sheets from DMH, and
- may have an afternoon training on legislative advocacy.

The Federation is also:

- planning an art contest. Entries will be posted to their website for on-line voting. The winning entry will be the poster for the 2009 Children’s Mental Health Day.
- Asking libraries to highlight books on children’s mental health in May.

C. Next Program Review site visit

The next visit will be to the Clara Martin Center in Randolph on March 27.

D. Other

- Alice noted that the Department of Mental Health (DMH) is working to make the Department’s website more visible and responsive to expressed needs.
- Charlie reported that the children’s mental health has applied for two grants:

- \$9 million over 5 years for adolescents transitioning to adult life. Focus would be on building up appropriate services and supports for this age group, an area that has long been identified as needing more attention.
- \$300,000 over 3 years for suicide prevention. Focus would be on public awareness of early signs of depression and on gatekeeper training.

We expect to hear whether we have been awarded these grants in September.

- Charlie reported that there is much activity within DMH on several fronts that this committee may wish to explore:
 - Success Beyond Six, especially
 - Positive Behavior Supports (PBS, also known as PBIS)
 - Behavior Interventionists
 - Trauma practice
 - Better methods with which to engage families
 - Evidence Based Practices (EBP), especially around depression treatment
 - Early childhood
 - Transition to adult life
 - Public health model

III. DMH Vision, Mission

Tabled until the next meeting.

IV. Hot Topics

Alice explained that members may bring up any topics which seem to them to warrant notification or discussion at the meeting. It may have come up at the legislature, in the newspaper or on radio/television, in members' work, *etc.*

Masha reported that she had been part of a poster presentation at the recent annual conference in Tampa sponsored by the Florida Center for Mental Health Research at the University of South Florida. The presentation provided data from Vermont's small pilot project using the evidence based practice of standardized assessments to demonstrate change over time in treatment.

V. Public Comment

None.

VI. Potential agenda items for next meeting *[date to be determined]*

- Selection of Chairperson
- DMH Vision and Mission
- Some aspect of Success Beyond Six work groups